

# **INDIANA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

## **Use of Non-Exclusionary and Exclusionary Time-Out**

### **Policy /Procedure O-47**

**Policy:** The primary responsibility of staff is to ensure student safety. For those students who exhibit exceptional behavior, it is imperative that necessary steps be taken to provide a safe environment for the student and others. To ensure that the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ISBVI) maintains a safe environment for ISBVI students; it is the policy of the ISBVI to direct the ISBVI Superintendent to ensure that the ISBVI administration and ISBVI staff respond appropriately to situations involving student health, safety and well being.

The ISBVI Board directs the ISBVI Superintendent to ensure ISBVI staff complies with this policy by:

- 1) Developing ISBVI Procedures to implement the ISBVI Board Policy on the Use of Non-Exclusionary and Exclusionary Time-out of students which must serve as a) notice to ISBVI staff and b) clearly delineate and detail their responsibilities, expectations, and procedures to follow;
- 2) Providing ISBVI staff written notice and documenting their awareness and receipt of these documents by obtaining their signatures;
- 3) Affording initial and periodic on-going training to ISBVI staff on the ISBVI Board Policy on Use of Non-Exclusionary and Exclusionary Time-Out and accompanying ISBVI Procedures.

### **ISBVI Policy O-47**

**Adopted by ISBVI Board: August 17, 2009**

**Reviewed and Approved: 10/21/13, 10/22/18**

# Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

## Procedure for the Use of Non-Exclusionary and Exclusionary Time-Out

### Procedure O-47

"Time-out" is a popular phrase used in many different ways by educators, administrators, parents, mental health service providers and other personnel involved with youth in public education settings. The definition may vary, however, from individual to individual. For the purposes of these guidelines, time-out must be defined in the following ways:

**Non-exclusionary time-out** is defined as the removal of reinforcers (*e.g.*, preferred activity, teacher attention) from the child/youth. There are two levels of non-exclusionary time-out; planned ignoring and removal of reinforcement.

a. ***Planned ignoring*** is the removal of social reinforcers, such as teacher or classmate attention, physical contact, or verbal interaction for a brief period of time (10-60 seconds)\* when the student engages in undesired behavior.

b. ***Removal of reinforcement*** is the removal of materials the student is interacting with for a period of time (1-3 minutes)\*.

**Exclusionary time-out** is defined as the removal of the child/youth from the reinforcing conditions. Non-exclusionary time out is less intrusive and must be tried first. Exclusionary time-out has three levels. Listed from the least to the most intrusive, these include contingent observation, exclusion time-out, and isolation time-out.

a. ***Contingent observation*** is the removal of the child/youth from the current environment to another location in the room or setting. The student still observes ongoing or instructional activities but may not participate in them. Optimal time limits are 30-60 seconds\*.

b. ***Exclusion time-out*** is the removal of the child/youth from the current environment to another location within the same room where the student cannot observe ongoing activities. Examples of exclusion are sitting behind a partition or sitting in a corner. Time effective in changing behavior will vary according to the age of the student. According to research, the maximum effective time is 2-5 minutes\*.

c. ***Isolation time-out*** is the isolation of the child/youth from all probable reinforcers by being placed in a different room/hallway, etc. under the **constant supervision** of qualified staff. Isolation requires a previously defined time duration. The length of time

must not exceed **one minute per year** of age of the student with a maximum of 12 minutes\*.

*If isolation time-out is used, the following cautions must be considered:*

Isolation time-out must not be accomplished by forced or physical coercion of a student into the "time-out" area. This often results in a power struggle that serves to initiate or escalate a student's physical aggression, poses an increased risk of harm to both student and staff and could be interpreted by the student that physical control is legitimate.

A student **must not** be placed in a time-out area where they cannot be visually observed by a responsible staff person(s) trained in the procedures.

- The specific room used for isolation time-out must meet the following criteria:
  - An adequate opening to view the student
  - Adequate lighting
  - Adequate size (no smaller 6 feet X 6 feet with normal ceiling height)
  - A non-injurious environment, which may include carpeting or padded surface and no loose furniture
  - An **unlocked** door

**Seclusion time-out** is defined as placement of a student alone in a locked room. This is deemed an unacceptable practice and **will not** be utilized at the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

\*Although all times included here are based on research and presented as guidelines, it must be understood that, based on individual student needs, times may vary. In all instances, **the briefest**, effective time must be utilized. Time-out, used appropriately with forethought, can provide an effective response to challenging behaviors. However, the use of time-out must be planned and purposeful and not as an act of retribution or respite for the teacher.

### **1. Time-out must serve a legitimate educational function.**

Classroom management techniques, as well as individual student behavior interventions, must maintain a constructive focus that results in an effective and positive educational environment. To change the misbehavior, you need to understand why it is being performed. When the child is in the regular educational environment, the level of reinforcement can be judged as lean, moderate, or rich. If it is rated as rich, this would mean the child is receiving lots of positive reinforcement (e.g., verbal or physical praise). If the environment is considered lean, the child is receiving very little reinforcement. Moderate would be considered somewhere between lean and rich. The intent of any behavior or discipline intervention is not merely to reduce or control undesired behaviors, but to instruct in the acquisition of appropriate replacement behaviors. It is important to be able to precisely define the behavior you would like to decrease or increase. Example: *The child will decrease the number of times he speaks without raising his hand.* Or: *The*

*child will increase his compliance with teacher-given directions.* The definitions need to be as specific as possible.

For time-out to be an effective intervention, it is imperative that the educational environment where the undesired behavior occurs would be rated as rich. This serves two purposes: it motivates the child to desire the time-in setting and it serves as a severe contrast to the non-enriched time-out environment.

It is critical that educators determine if time-out, as with any behavior strategy used, is effective in changing the behavior of concern. If changes do not occur or the behavior intensifies, educators must consider alternative interventions.

## **2. Time-out must be used only in a manner commensurate with recommended practices and proportionate to the intensity of the behavior.**

Time-out must never be used as a punishment. Rather, time-out must be considered a technique that may be employed to allow the student time away from the situation to reflect and regain composure. The outcome of time-out must be a reduction in the undesirable behavior. In order to enforce a time-out, an adult must **always be present**. The child must NOT be the one responsible for determining when they are released but must be reintroduced into the educational environment in as timely a manner as feasibly possible.

- Excessive duration of any given time-out is not supported by research and can be counter-productive in reducing challenging behaviors. Therefore, the time, duration and release criteria must be determined before the time-out is imposed. (see page1 for suggested times).
- The frequency and duration of time-out must be closely reviewed and evaluated To assure that no individual student is in isolation time-out on a chronic basis. If this appears to be happening, then the effectiveness of the procedure with a particular student is highly questionable and alternative behavioral interventions must be explored.

## **3. The IEP team must be involved in making decisions concerning the use of behavior reduction procedures requiring excessive removal from the classroom.**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team consider positive behavior support for a student whose behavior impedes his/her learning or the learning of others. When behavior reduction strategies are being considered, the IEP team must determine the instruction students need to learn new, more acceptable behaviors (replacement behaviors). In addition, excessive removal of a student receiving special education services from the classroom may constitute a change of placement. This situation requires that the IEP team meet to:

- review the student's supports and services,

- determine adequacy of those supports and services, and
- make the necessary adjustments as needed.

#### **4. Written classroom procedures must be developed prior to the use of timeout.**

When considering the use of time-out, educators must establish:

- a set of rules, which have been taught to all students, with clear expectations and consequences,
- a hierarchy of planned responses to behaviors of concern, from least to most intrusive,
- identified areas where time-outs will occur, considering locations both in and out of the current setting,
- a process for training other personnel (*e.g.*, residential mentors, paraeducators, volunteers, support staff) in the procedures related to the use of time-out,
- a process for documenting the use and effectiveness of the time-out strategy,
- a process for obtaining parent or caregiver permission prior to the use of Isolation time-out,

**Note:** If parent/caregiver permission has not been obtained, isolation time-out may only be used in an emergency. Emergency is defined as serious, probable, imminent threat of bodily harm to self or others where there is present ability to effect such harm .

- a process for documenting the use of time-out, including but not limited to date, time, behavior which precipitated the use of time-out, length of time in isolation time-out and results of the procedure (Attachment A),
- an opportunity to allow the student to process with an adult, and
- methods which allow the student to re-enter the setting in a positive way.

To conclude, time-out is a safe, legal strategy that can be effective if used with caution, care and concern for the student's welfare. However, greater consideration must be given to the array of positive interventions that can maximize student learning and assist in the acquisition of replacement behaviors. Additionally, students who require behavior interventions must have a Functional Behavior Assessment completed and an appropriate Behavior Intervention Plan established that has been developed by the Multi-disciplinary Team, agreed upon, approved and signed by the Case Conference participants. In some cases, approved Behavior Intervention Plan may exceed the time parameters and sequences established in this policy yet may still be deemed appropriate and consistent with this policy.

#### **References**

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- Ewing, T.S. (1998). Time-out: Guidelines for teachers. In A.S. Canter & S. A. Carroll

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